

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 1144

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, GR
SUBJECT: THE GOG CRITICIZES ROYALIST THEOTOKIS

REF: ATHENS 275 (NOTAL)

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED. FORMER MINISTER SPYRIDON THEOTOKIS, CONSIDERED TO BE ONE OF THE MORE RESPECTABLE PROPONENTS OF THE ROYALIST CAUSE, HAS AGAIN (REFTEL) DRAWN GOVERNMENT FIRE, THIS TIME AS A RESULT OF AN INTERVIEW ON NATIONAL GERMAN TV. ACCORDING TO REPORTS IN GREECE ON THIS INTERVIEW (WHICH WAS PROBABLY SHOWN IN GERMANY EARLIER THIS WEEK), THEOTOKIS CRITICIZED PRIME MINISTER CARAMANLIS FOR MOVING TO THE LEFT (CLAIMING CARAMANLIS HAD DESERTED HIS EARLIER CONSERVATIVE PRINCIPLES AS A RESULT OF HIS ELEVEN YEAR STINT ABROAD), CALLED FOR A CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE TO REESTABLISH THE HEREDITARY MONARCHY AS A GUARANTOR OF PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY, AND URGED THAT GREECE RETURN TO THE MILITARY FOLD OF NATO FOR HER OWN SELF-INTEREST.

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2. THEOTOKIS CHARGED THAT THE LEFT WAS GAINING GROUND IN GREECE AND ONE SHOULD EXPECT THE FORMATION OF A POPULAR FRONT VICTORY AT THE POLLS COULD NOT BE EXCLUDED ALTHOUGH PERSONALLY HE BELIEVED THE "SILENT MAJORITY OF THE GREEK PEOPLE IS OPPOSED TO A POPULAR FRONT. HE PREDICTED SUCH A DEVELOPMENT WOULD HAVE DIRE CONSEQUENCES FOR FREE EUROPE AND THE ENTIRE WESTERN WORLD. IT WOULD MEAN THE LOSS OF GREECE

TO THE WEST WITH ITS STRATEGIC CONSEQUENCES IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN AND THE BALKANS.

3. THEOTOKIS DENIED THAT HE WAS BEING USED AS A PUPPET OF THE JUNTISTS SEEKING TO RETURN TO POWER AND POINTED TO HIS SERVICE IN PAST DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENTS AS PROOF OF HIS DEMOCRATIC CREDENTIALS. HE CONCLUDED SAYING THAT HE WOULD "CONTINUE TO BE ALWAYS AVAILABLE TO SERVE MY COUNTRY."

4. WHETHER THEOTOKIS EXPECTED TO DRAW ATTENTION TO HIMSELF AND THE ROYALIST CAUSE THROUGH THIS INTERVIEW, THE GOG'S REACTION TO HIS STATEMENTS RESULTED IN CONSIDERABLE PUBLICITY FOR HIM. THIS BEGAN WITH A SHARP ATTACK AGAINST THEOTOKIS BY THE MINISTER TO THE PRESIDENCY OF THE GOVERNMENT, AND NEW DEMOCRACY PARTY SPOKESMAN, GEORGE RALLIS. A FORMER ROYALIST HIMSELF AND A COUSIN OF THEOTOKIS, RALLIS CONDEMNED WHAT HE TERMED THE "PARAPOLITICAL ACTIVITY OF AN OLD COLLEAGUE AND RELATIVE" BECAUSE IT CAUSED UNJUSTIFIED CONCERN AND AN ATMOSPHERE OF DEFEATISM AMONG THE "CONSERVATIVE SECTION OF THE GREEK PEOPLE." MOREOVER, RALLIS CHARGED, IT INDIRECTLY ALSO REINFORCED THE SO-CALLED IDEOLOGY OF THE UNREPENTENT REMNANTS OF THE JUNTA. RALLIS THEN PRAISED CARAMANLIS' NATIONAL LEADERSHIP WHICH "IS THE STRONGEST ARMAMENT" OF DEMOCRACY AGAINST ANY THREAT FROM EITHER EXTREME.

5. RALLIS' STATEMENT WAS FOLLOWED BY A SECOND BROADSIDE ATTRIBUTED TO A "GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN." HE CHARGED THAT, WHILE THEOTOKIS HAD EVERY RIGHT TO EXPRESS HIS OWN OPINION, HE DID NOT HAVE THE RIGHT TO INSULT THE NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE. CONFIDENTIAL

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GREEKS RECALL, SAID THE SPOKESMAN, THAT THEOTOKIS WAS ELECTED A DEPUTY IN NOVEMBER 1974 ON THE GOVERNMENT NEW DEMOCRACY PARTY TICKET AFTER THE GREEK WITHDRAWAL FROM NATO, THUS DEMONSTRATING THAT HE BOTH CONCURRED IN AND ENDORSED THAT POLICY. THE SPOKESMAN ALSO POINTED OUT THAT DURING THE 1974 ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN THEOTOKIS PRAISED CARAMANLIS AND PLEDGED THE PRIME MINISTER HIS SUPPORT FOR THE EFFORT OF NATIONAL REBUILDING IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE JUNTA, WHOSE REMNANTS THEOTOKIS WAS NOW TRYING TO SALVAGE. END UNCLASSIFIED.

6. BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL. COMMENT. THE ROYALISTS HAVE BECOME MORE VOCAL IN RECENT MONTHS IN THEIR EXPRESSIONS OF UNHAPPINESS WITH AND CRITICISM OF CARAMANLIS AND THE DEMOCRATIC FREEDOMS HE HAS RESTORED TO GREECE (E.G. THE EXCESSES OF A FREE PRESS, LEGALIZATION OF THE COMMUNISTS). HOWEVER, ALTHOUGH THE ROYALISTS ARE NOT IGNORED BY GOG, IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT MUCH OF THIS TALK IS TAKEN SERIOUSLY AS A REAL THREAT TO CARAMANLIS OR THE STABILITY OF HIS GOVERNMENT. END CONFIDENTIAL. KUBISCH

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